



Donald T. DiFrancesco
Acting Governor

Jane M. Kenny
Commissioner

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Community Matters

A Newsletter for the Employees of the Department of Community Affairs

VIEWPOINT

Thank You

by Commissioner Jane M. Kenny

When I served as Chief of Policy and Planning for then Governor Whitman, there were not many DCA issues that came across my desk. So when the governor asked me in the spring of 1996 to be Commissioner of DCA, I had a lot of homework to do.

What I found were programs that made a real difference in people's lives.

And when I arrived here, I found a workforce committed to helping others.

Though I'm told I've been here longer than any of my predecessors, my five and a half years as commissioner seem to have gone by quickly.

Together, we've made some great progress, from new programs that have won national acclaim for their originality and effectiveness, to a new approach to improving our work environment at DCA.

Now I've been asked by Christie Whitman to work for her in another capacity – as administrator of Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I look forward to the challenge. The fact that the region includes Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands had nothing to do with my decision to accept the job.

I will miss this place.

It isn't hard to get up for work each morning when you're helping families achieve their dreams of affordable housing, restoring cities as centers of commerce and culture, strengthening local governments, assisting our most vulnerable populations or making the state safer for its residents.

Thanks to your work, we've put DCA on the map.

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Kenny Leaving DCA

Commissioner Accepts EPA Regional Post

Jane M. Kenny, DCA's longest-serving commissioner, will leave behind a host of nationally renowned programs and an employee-driven system for improving workplace conditions when she becomes regional administrator for Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

EPA Administrator Christie Whitman last week announced the appointment of Commissioner Kenny to head the regional EPA office. The commissioner's resignation is effective November 16. Deputy Commissioner Anthony Cancro will serve as acting commissioner.

"I've had the pleasure of working with true professionals at DCA who are committed to helping the people and communities of New Jersey," said Kenny. "I appreciate all that our employees have done to make DCA successful during my tenure here."

At EPA, Kenny will be responsible for agency programs in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Region 2, with headquarters in lower Manhattan, is one of 10 EPA regional offices.

"In her capacity, first as my Chief of Policy and Planning in New Jersey, then as Commissioner for New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs, Jane has proven herself to be a leader on many issues," said Whitman, in making the announcement. "As Region 2's new administrator, Jane will bring a clear understanding of government, policy, and the importance of teamwork in getting things done. Her efforts on brownfields redevelopment, urban revitalization, and sustainability have had a tremendous impact in New Jersey. That, along with her experience in both the private sector and senior levels of government, will serve the people in Region 2 well."

Kenny has served as DCA commissioner since May 1996.

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Codes Employees Help Trade Center Injured

The three DCA Division of Codes and Standards employees were each heading to Liberty State Park in Jersey City on the morning of September 11 to do a routine inspection of a new waterfront restaurant.

By the time **Anthony Barzelatto**, **Donald Firestine** and **Michael Bruno** reached the park at about 9:15 a.m., they knew their day would be anything but routine.

Both towers of the World Trade Center were afire – directly across the Hudson River from where they stood.

All three had heard the reports of planes hitting the towers. They saw the smoke pouring out of the buildings as they drove separately on the New Jersey Turnpike. When they got to the waterfront area of Liberty State Park, they watched the burning towers with a "sense of awe, disbelief, horror."

When the first tower collapsed with the sound of a prolonged explosion, the ground beneath them shook and a great cloud of dust and smoke obscured the city. A man next to them fainted.

"When the towers came down, all hell broke loose," said Bruno.

The three Codes officers quickly moved into action, driven, they said, by the need to help. They began

clearing the dock area of chairs and other items to make room for the first of a series of triage centers for medical personnel to help the injured.

It didn't take long before boats began arriving from across the Hudson.

One after another, police vessels from New York, Long Island and New Jersey brought the injured and dazed to Liberty State Park and shuttled emergency personnel back to lower Manhattan.

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Left to right - Anthony Barzelatto, Michael Bruno and Donald Firestine.

Agencies Helping

The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency is the latest DCA-affiliated agency to offer assistance to families directly affected by the terrorist attacks.

The HMFA has announced special disaster relief procedures to assist borrowers affected by the events of September 11. Relief options include suspending or reducing mortgage payments for a period of time or establishing longer payback plans that will result in lower monthly payments.

HMFA mortgage representatives will work with the affected borrowers to find the solution that best fits their specific needs.

The HMFA assistance is one of several services being offered by DCA and its agencies in the wake of the tragic events.

The Homelessness Prevention Program in the Division of Housing and Community Resources has received several inquiries from individuals and families whose ability to pay the rent has been impacted by the World Trade Center attacks.

The program has issued flyers alerting families directly affected by the disaster that they might be eligible to receive rental or mortgage assistance.

The Division of Fire Safety helped staff round-the-clock operations at the state Office of Emergency Management for two weeks, and the Division of Local Government Services has offered technical assistance to municipalities that have experienced budget problems resulting from disaster response or recovery.

Immigrant Assists Country He Loves

Neal Vastola, an Italian immigrant, had to grind his teeth to keep from crying.

The country with which he has had "a 36 year love affair" had been attacked in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

"I felt that if I could do something, it was a moral obligation to do what I could do," said Vastola, a state building inspector with DCA's Division of Codes and Standards.

On the Friday after the September 11 attacks, Vastola went to Exchange Place in Jersey City to help load and unload ferryboats with supplies. He also helped to clean out the American Express building in lower Manhattan, and used a fire hose to clear away dust near the New York piers that had turned to muck from the rain.

In Jersey City, "truck after truck came in. You name it, they brought it," he said. "Dog food, goggles, ready-made sandwiches, medical supplies. It was unreal."

He said one of the reasons he volunteered was to help ease the emotional pain.

"To be honest with you, my jaws were aching from grinding my teeth to keep from crying," said Vastola.

He's not the only member of his family to assist in the aftermath of the attacks.

His son, Louis, a member of the National Guard and a sheriff's officer in Hunterdon County, assisted at the Ground Zero site. "Some of what he told me was very disturbing."

Vastola's daughter, Raffaella Tozzi, is a police officer, who is doing forensics work at the Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island, where material from the World Trade Center is being taken for investigation.

Kenny Leaving DCA...continued

In accepting Kenny's resignation, Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco said that, "families and communities across the state have benefited from Jane Kenny's dedication to public service."

"Under her direction, DCA has made remarkable strides to help revitalize our urban areas and improve neighborhoods throughout New Jersey," said DiFrancesco. "The commissioner and her department have been recognized nationally for a toolkit of programs that have brought new activity and fresh hope to New Jersey's cities."

During Commissioner Kenny's tenure, DCA created a variety of urban redevelopment tools, including the nation's first construction code to encourage the reuse of existing buildings. The code has helped to spark a 65 percent increase in rehabilitation work in the state's five largest cities in its first three years.

Under Commissioner Kenny, DCA also created the first state program to build affordable housing that meets top environmental and energy standards. The EPA recognized the "Sustainable Development/Affordable Housing Pilot Program" with a Clean Air Excellence Award in 2000.

The department also established the nation's first program to support the neighborhood efforts of faith-based organizations, created an urban home ownership program among several new affordable housing initiatives, and promoted the cleanup and redevelopment of industrial brownfields sites.

In 1999, Commissioner Kenny initiated the Smart Growth Planning Grant Program to help local governments to develop plans that lead to smart growth and more livable and sustainable communities.

Local governments, meanwhile, have found a variety of new ways to share services and save money thanks to a pair of programs developed by Commissioner Kenny's DCA. More than 330 units of local government have taken advantage of the REDI and REAP initiatives that provide financial incentives for towns and school districts to consolidate services and reward taxpayers in communities that take such actions.

During Commissioner Kenny's tenure, DCA established the Community Building Initiative, an employee-driven process for improving the department's work environment.

Prior to serving as Commissioner of DCA and Chief of Policy and Planning in the Office of the Governor, Kenny was Vice President of Corporate and Community Affairs for Beneficial Management Corp. She also served as the Cabinet Secretary for former Governor Thomas Kean.

Acting Gov. DiFrancesco said he would name Anthony Cancro to serve as Acting Commissioner of the department. Cancro was appointed deputy commissioner of Community Affairs in August 1999. Prior to his appointment, he had served as director of DCA's Division of Housing and Community Resources.

Blood Donations High

Blood collected from DCA employees during last week's drive was nearly twice the amount donated during typical department blood drives, according to DCA's Office of Human Resources.

Motivated by the tragic events of September 11, a steady stream of DCA employees, including Commissioner Kenny, produced 41 units of blood for the Community Blood Council of New Jersey, Inc. **Betty Anne LaMendola**, who coordinated the event for DCA, said that normal department blood drives generate about 23 units of blood.

"I'm very pleased," said Betty Ann. "It had to do with September 11, I'm sure."

Betty Ann said that other employees were planning to donate blood at the Community Blood Council's center on Parkside Avenue in Trenton, and others could not donate because they had already given blood within the past two months.

Security Steps at DCA

Shortly after the September 11 attacks on our nation, DCA formed a security task force to best ensure the safety of our building and its employees. As part of that effort, and in light of recent incidents and false alarms in the U.S. involving anthrax, the department has issued recommended guidelines for handling suspicious letters or packages and has taken additional security precautions.

The following security procedures are being implemented:

- All employees are strongly encouraged to wear their department ID badges at all times in all areas of the building. Within the next few weeks, DCA will have the capacity to take digital photos of all employees and make them available to security guards at the front desk.
- Employees will be required to escort all visitors to their offices and back to the front desk.
- Individuals without official business with DCA will not be allowed use of the first floor bathrooms or cafeteria.
- The back door to the building will be for emergency use only and will be equipped with alarms.
- Employees will be prohibited from using the loading dock for entering or exiting the building.

These are strictly precautionary steps. The department's security task force, chaired by **Greg Vida** and **Ray Montgomery**, is meeting to discuss any other measures we can take to create the safest possible environment at DCA.

Guidelines for Mail

DCA, like workplaces around the nation, has issued simple safeguards on how to handle suspicious letters



or packages. The guidelines, designed to significantly reduce any potential risk, focus on how to identify such a letter or package and the steps to take in certain situations.

The guidelines were provided to all employees last week. If you need a copy of the material, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

Codes Employees...continued

Barzelatto, Firestine and Bruno helped unload the people from the boats – infants, senior citizens, men, women and children, an employee with a Stock Exchange badge, some on stretchers, some in wheelchairs, most covered in a thick, gray dust.

"There were burns, broken bones, smoke inhalation. They were shocked and scared," said Bruno. "They were just relieved to get out of the city."

One fireman came over on a boat, had his hand "completely bandaged," and went back to New York to assist, Bruno said.

For Bruno, an electrical subcode official, and Firestine, a building subcode official, the day and evening would be spent unloading the injured. Only emergency personnel were being allowed into the affected area in New York.

Barzelatto, a fire subcode official, has been a firefighter in Tenafly for 23 years. After helping Bruno and Firestine assist the first boat of injured, he rode to Manhattan on the return trip to help in the effort to locate people and guide them to the safety of the boats.

"I did the sign of the cross 19 times on the way over," said Barzelatto. "They said there were three things to be careful of. Gas leaks. They didn't know if the buildings around us would collapse. And they weren't sure if they used biological warfare on us.

"When I got to the dock, it was like something you'd see in a war movie," he said. "There was mass hysteria. People were jumping on the boats to get out of the city."

One of the first people Barzelatto encountered was a woman bleeding from the head, whose leg was broken in several places. The woman asked him, "How does my hair look?" Barzelatto, trying to ease the situation, responded. "How does my hair look?" His head is shaved.

After making several trips back and forth across the Hudson with the injured, Barzelatto said he made his way to within a block and a half of the World Trade Center site.

"No matter where you were it was total devastation," he said, witnessing a crushed fire truck and police car. "You'd find people just wandering around."

At one point, a nanny handed him a baby and started walking away, telling him that the "parents were gone." He convinced the nanny to take

the baby on one of the boats to New Jersey.

Some people approached the boats "with all the possessions they could carry," said Barzelatto. "One couple had gas masks on. They said they bought them a long time ago on E Bay."

Barzelatto said he comforted a New York City parks officer crying hysterically in the corner of a building. Her brother was a cop who was presumed dead in the collapse.

He was given a paper mask to cover his nose and mouth. But his eyes burned from the stinging smoke and dust. He said he stopped at an open fire hydrant to flush his eyes with water. The soot was more than a foot deep in places, and swirled in the air as passing ambulances whisked by.

Back in Liberty State Park, ambulances from as far away as Hunterdon County began lining up to transport the injured.

"There were ambulances as far as you could look," said Firestine. "It made you proud. The emergency personnel, firefighters, EMS converged on Liberty State Park very quickly."

Barzelatto said he saw two bodies brought over to Jersey City that evening. "They said one was a fireman and the other, it was all you could do to make out that it was a body." He arrived home before midnight, threw all of his clothes in the garbage – "shoes, underwear, everything" – and tried unsuccessfully to sleep. He was back at Liberty State Park at 6 a.m. the next day, but he didn't get another opportunity to help in New York.

Barzelatto said the experience has clearly changed him. He went to the first Giants home game after the attack and was "crying like a baby" at the patriotic displays and tributes to the victims.

"I used to be an excitable person," he said. "There's not much in life that will bother me anymore."

Bruno's "disbelief that something like this could happen" was sharpened by the fact that he had been offered a job with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and would likely have been at the World Trade Center when the attacks occurred had he accepted the position.

The opportunity to do something to assist has helped the three men cope with the events.

"Even the little bit we felt we were doing, we had to help in some way, shape or form," said Firestine.



Community Building News

Special Thanks

Recently, three of the Community Building Initiative's most valued members resigned their positions due to an increase in their job responsibilities. The Initiative has benefited greatly from their involvement since its inception and their absence will be greatly felt. Our sincere gratitude is extended to the following exceptional individuals who gave us their valuable time, energy, passion and expertise towards improving the community within DCA.

Roseanne Rizza from the Division of Housing and Community Resources was an original member of the task force, a Round Table member and a committee chair. Roseanne's passion and dedication to improving the DCA community has been invaluable and never ending. She is strongly committed to our mission and will continue to be an advocate for all DCA employees.

Ivette Edwards from the Division of Housing and Community Resources was the chair of the Training Committee and **Billie Miller** from HMFA was a Round Table member and chair of the Employee Recognition Committee. Under their expert leadership and dedication, a number of the recommendations were ratified and approved by the Round Table and Commissioner Kenny.

New committee chairs are **Jackie Welsh** from Human Resources, Training Committee; **Colleen Fitzgerald** from Housing and Community Resources, Employee Recognition Committee, and **Mary Ann Barkus** from Housing and Community Resources, Family Work/Employee Interaction/Open Communication Committee.

Two vacant Round Table positions have not yet been approved.

What Would You Like to See on This Page?

The members of the Public Relations Committee are looking for article suggestions or articles to be published on this page. Should you have any suggestions or articles, please contact **Peggy Fritz, Pat Fowler, Vicky Jones** or **Jim Cordingley**.

Special Kudos

Thanks so much to **Pat McGuire**, Housing Services element, for making the patriotic ribbons that were in the basket in the lobby the week of October 8 and available to all employees.

Thank You...continued

Programs like REDI and REAP, the Rehabilitation Subcode, the Faith Based Community Development Initiative, the Sustainable Development/Affordable Housing Pilot Program, Smart Growth Planning Grants, Brownfields and others have served as models for the nation.

But it's not just the marquee programs that have made DCA special. It's been the everyday, unsung work that you do at your cubicles, desks, offices and out in the field that has helped to make New Jersey a better place for all families.

It's truly been a pleasure working with you on behalf of this great state and its people. I wish you continued success in the future.

Who WAS That Cutie Pie???

If you guessed **Keith Jones**, you were right.

Keith, as many of you know, is the director for the department's Division of Housing and Community Resources. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree and two Masters Degrees (City & Regional Planning and Public Administration) from Rutgers University.

Before coming to DCA, Keith worked for Middlesex County as a planner and director of housing assistance programs. Since joining DCA in 1980, he has worked in various administrative positions within the divisions of Housing and Community Resources and Codes and Standards.

Keith and his wife, Aida, (Division of Fire Safety) reside in Evesham Township with their two daughters, Megan and Hailey. Keith also has two older daughters, Janessa and Janaye.



Division Presentations

The first division presentation held on September 28 by **Sheri Smith** from the fiscal office was very well received and informative. Those in attendance received valuable information regarding employee travel as well as having their many questions addressed.

This presentation, as well as all future presentations, are a result of a Community Building recommendation and a suggestion by **Denise Sampson**. We would like to thank Sheri and everyone who attended for making our first session a success.

Computer Tips

Have you ever had a "Senior Moment" when trying to E-mail a DCA employee and you could only remember their first name. Not to worry; simply follow the steps below for locating an employee by their first name:

1. Log on to Outlook
2. Hit "New"
3. Hit "To"
4. Hit "Find"
5. Type in first name and hit "OK"

Everyone in the department with the same first name will appear in the selection box. Just click on the one you are looking for. Hint: Keep in mind that some employees may be listed by their formal first name while others may use the shortened version. Ex: James vs. Jim, Patricia vs. Pat.



Upcoming Events

October 30 "Managing Time Your Way" - Room 521 - 12:15 and 1:15

November 7 "Grandparents Raising Their Grandchildren" - Room 816 - 12 to 1

November 20 "Maintaining Your Computer" - Room 129 - 2pm

November 27 "Juggling Your Work and Family" - Room 521 - 12:15 and 1:15